

Business Letters

A business letter needs to:

- Be as short as possible
- Make a clearly defined request
- Include your address
- Include the name and address of the recipient (inside address)
- Include the date it was written
- Include a salutation
- Include a closing
- Be about three (short) paragraphs.

Paragraph 1

- Identify yourself and explain why you are writing

Paragraph 2

- Make a specific, clearly stated request (not for 'any information' -- state what you want & be sure it's not on their website!)

Paragraph 3

- End your letter and thank the recipient for his/her time

Style of writing should be straight to the point and polite. Avoid unnecessary information, extra detail, wordiness, extensive background information, adverbs, and adjectives.

Standard format is 'flush', which means no indentation. Every line should start at the margin.

Proofread and spell check carefully!

Sample Letter

Any Student
123 My Home Address
My town, State Zip
October 7, 2005

(Heading)

Ms. Design Engineer
Widget Roller Coaster Company
123 Fast Turn Drive
Park Town, VA 20458

(Inside Address)

Dear Ms Engineer:

(Salutation)

I am a student at Farmwell Station Middle School in Ashburn, Virginia. As part of an honors science project, I am researching the physics of roller coasters.

I am writing to request information about your unique design for the widgets that help keep the roller coaster attached to the track. Could you please send me a picture of your design and a written explanation of how the widgets work? I am most interested in the Wingfield widget that your company has recently been producing.

I appreciate your time and effort in helping me to better understand how these products work. I look forward to a reply at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

(Closing)

Any Student's Signature

(handwritten name)

Any Student

(Signature)

Business Letter Format

Indentation – None

- Should be ‘flush’ with the left margin

Salutation (greeting – Dear____:)

- Always use a colon after the salutation
- If you do not have a specific person’s name, use a salutation that will help the person who opens the letter send it to the correct person (Design Team, Plant Manager...)

Body is the main part of the letter

- Do not indent paragraphs; skip a line after each paragraph instead.
- Keep writing straight to the point.
- Make your request as specific and clearly expressed as possible.

Closing comes after the body

- Capitalize only the first word of the closing.
- A comma must follow the closing.

Signature

- Your name typed at least three lines below the closing.
- Sign your name in the space between the closing and the typed name of your signature.

Center the letter vertically on the page

- Print the letter so that the **center of the second paragraph is as close to the center of the paper as possible** – use the return key to add empty lines above your letter to push the letter down and center it vertically.

Other important points

- Proofread out loud to find awkward phrasing.
- Use spell-check and proofread for homophones, homonyms and contraction or pronoun errors.
- Check your recipient’s web site (do not ask for information that you could get online).

Name:_____

Rubric for Business Letter	Student check	Points earned
Heading, inside address, salutation (proper format / location/complete) 10 points		
Body paragraphs (follow instructions) 10 points		
Letter makes clear and specific request 15 points		
Closing - correct capitalization & comma. At least 3 empty lines for hand written name. Signature – follows instruction. 10 points		
Format – vertically centered, spaced appropriately 10 points		
Mechanics perfect 10 points		
Met deadline 10 points		
Total Points Earned / 75		